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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 13421

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV
SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER

1. IN A COURTESY CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES, JUNE 1, I FOUND HIM RELAXED AND FRIENDLY. HE SPOKE HIGHLY OF AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND AND FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH. HE WAS WARM IN PRAISE OF THE REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING THE SECRETARY IN OTTAWA. HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE A STABILIZING INFLUENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS DURING THE DIFFICULT PERIOD THROUGH WHICH THE UNITED STATES IS PASSING DOMESTICALLY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES REMARKED THAT THE RECENT MEETING BETWEEN GISCARD D'ESTAING AND SCHMIDT HAD GONE WELL. THE FRENCH AND GERMANS CLEARLY INTEND TO WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER.
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3. HE SAID HIS NEXT MAJOR EXPERIENCE AS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE THE JUNE 4 MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS. WHILE HE FEELS FAIRLY CONFIDENT OF HIS COMMAND OF GERMAN AFFAIRS AND OF EUROPEAN ISSUES GENERALLY, HE SAID HE HAS HAD LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN BRUSSELS AND WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH A LEARNING PROCESS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE "DIFFICULT PROBLEMS" TO BE DEALT WITH AT THE JUNE 4 MEETING.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE REGARDS THE BRITISH RE-ENTRY NEGOTIATIONS AS A THORNY PROBLEM. IN HIS VIEW THE PRESENT BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS CONCENTRATING PERHAPS EXCESSIVELY ON SHORT-TERM FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE COMMUNITY, I.E. THE IMMEDIATE QUESTIONS OF HOW MUCH MEMBERSHIP COSTS AND YIELDS IN THE PURELY MONETARY SENSE. HE ADDED THAT BENEFITS IN COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP ACCRUE OVER TIME AND CANNOT BE READILY MEASURED IN DOLLARS AND CENTS TERMS. THEY INCLUDE INTANGIBLE BENEFITS OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE, ACCESS TO AN EXPANDING MARKET, INDUSTRIAL MODERNIZATION, ETC. HE HOPES THE BRITISH PROBLEMS CAN BE DISCUSSED IN THIS LARGER CONTEXT.

6. ON U.S.-FRENCH U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONS, FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES SAID THAT WHILE EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES ARE SEPARATE ENTITIES, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER. PROBLEMS IN THE PAST PERHAPS HAVE ARISEN BECAUSE BOTH SIDES HAVE BEEN SEEK-ING PERFECTION RATTER THAN SETTLING FOR LESS FORMAL BUT WORKABLE APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS AND ISSUES. HE SAID HE COULD AGREE WITH SOME ASPECTS OF JOBERT'S POLICIES--IMPLYING, BUT NOT STATING, THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHERS HE DISAGREED WITH. HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE WANTED TO AVOID SUSPICIONS AND QUESTIONS ARISING FROM MISUNDERSTANDINGS. WHEN WE DO DISAGREE ON ISSUES HE HOPES WE WILL BE ABLE TO DISCUSS OUR DIFFERENCES OPENLY AND FRANKLY, BUT WITHOUT RANCOR.

7. COMMENT: I HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES WISHES TO ESTABLISH CLOSE WORKING
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RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS. INDICATIVE OF THIS ATTITUDE MAY BE HIS RESPONSE TO A ROUTINE REQUEST TO HIS SECRETARY TO SET UP A COURTESY CALL FOR ME. FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES TELEPHONED ME PERSONALLY AND MADE THE APPOINTMENT FOR THE EARLIEST TIME HE WAS FREE--AT 5:00 P.M., SATURDAY, JUNE 1.
IRWIN

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